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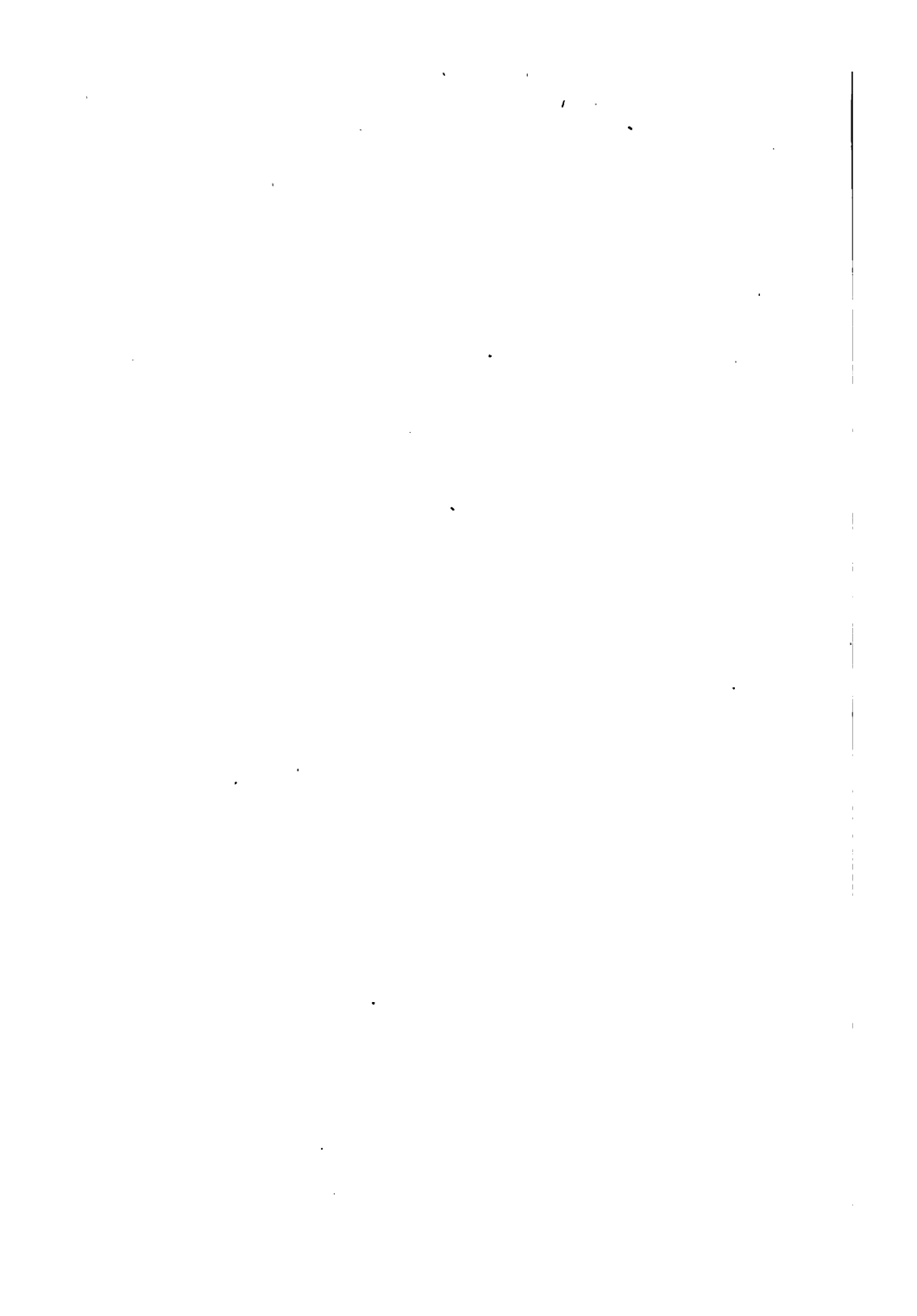
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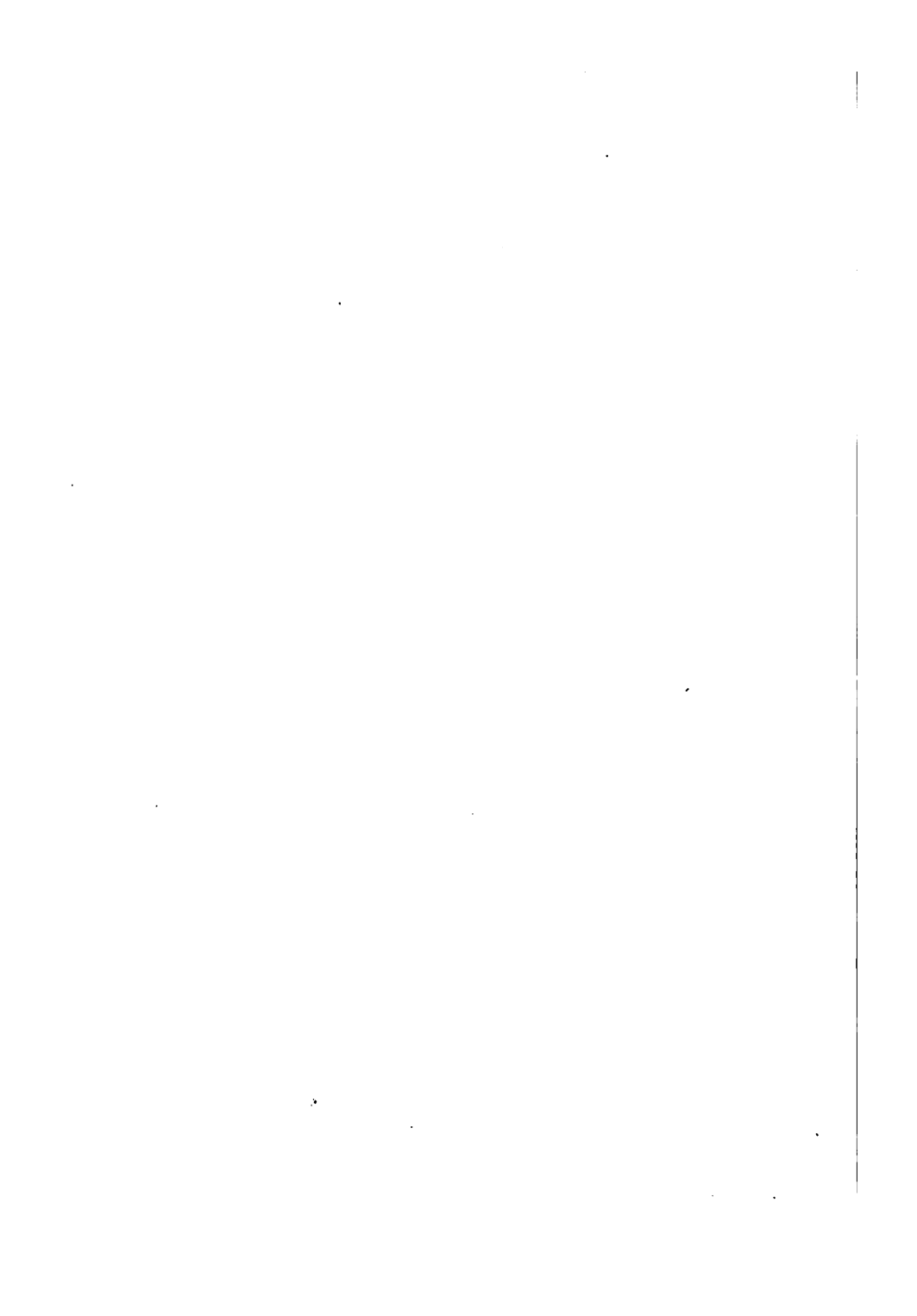
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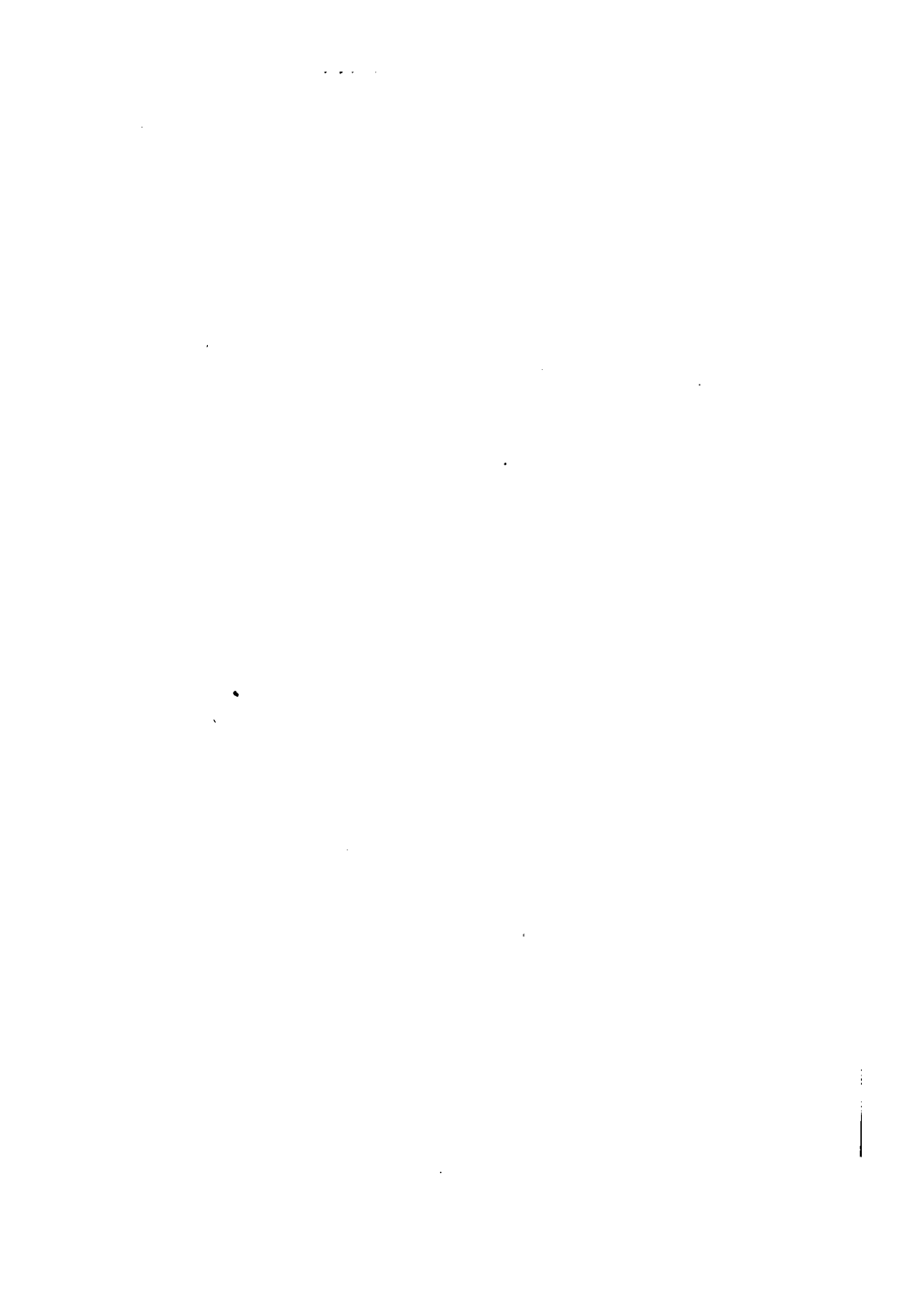
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THE
BIBLE RECORD OF CREATION

VIEWED IN ITS LETTER AND SPIRIT

TWO SERMONS

PREACHED AT ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, WOODFORD BRIDGE

BY
Barthmore
CHARLES B. WALLER, M.A.

AUTHOR OF

"THE APOCALYPSE VIEWED UNDER THE LIGHT OF THE DOCTRINES OF THE
UNFOLDING AGES, AND THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS"

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1885

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SERMON I.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."—GENESIS i. 1.

THERE is no part of the Bible which has been more criticized in these latter days, and received more unfavourable comment, than these early chapters in Genesis. The reason is this—that in these days the study of physical science; the tracing the laws which appear to regulate the combinations and movements of matter; and the vast and deeply interesting discoveries which have been made in regard to the antiquity of this earth, which reveal traces of life as having existed in the dim distances of what appears to our finite understandings the remotest past, far, far away beyond our Bible chronology of six thousand years;—has given encouragement to a sceptical spirit, which it is our business to lament and to guard against.

And the way to guard against this, in our judgment, is not by closing our eyes to the facts which true science lays bare ; it is not by denouncing them ; but by accepting them as a revelation from God, in the same reverent manner that we receive the revelations of His Word when spoken to us by prophets and apostles for our instruction in righteousness. For that spoken Word testifies to the truth that God made the heavens and the earth, and hath given them a law which shall not be broken ; therefore all revelation which God makes [to men, by so enlightening their understandings that they may read some of the wonderful things in the material world which may be judged of by the understanding and the senses, *must be in accord* with the revelations of this spoken Word. If there be an apparent discrepancy, we are at fault. God's work in the material as well as in the spiritual world, which are intimately blended together, we may be well assured is one harmonious whole ; and if there be any discord heard by us, it is an infirmity in our sense of hearing, and we must look to correct our judgment rather than to impugn the works of God.

We must allow that God creates and sustains all

things—things visible and invisible, things material and spiritual—and that all the works of His hand are harmonious and very good, and that, if there be discord in any part of His creation, it comes of that free will with which responsible personalities have been endowed, that they may pass through a period of probation.

Whenever, then, there is an apparent opposition between the truths stated to be such, which are derived from the study of nature and from the truths supposed to be such derived from the study of the Bible, we may rest assured that there is an error on man's part ; either the natural philosophers, the students of the material world, are in error, or maybe that divines, the students of the Bible, are themselves in error, and are drawing erroneous conclusions from the written Word, thus making the Word of God of none effect by their traditions of interpretation.

Now, there are some discoveries which the students of natural science have made which no one in his senses will dispute, and that because they are capable of demonstration. We no longer believe that the sun rises and sets and travels round the earth, but that this rising and setting, as we call it in speaking the language of appearances,

is the result of the earth revolving upon her own axis. We no longer believe that the existence of this globe has only been for some six thousand years, because the examination of the structure of the earth reveals to us revolutions which must have required countless ages to have accomplished. Such discoveries as these are *illuminations*, revealing somewhat of the mysteries of creation, enlarging our conceptions, disposing us more and more to wonder and adore.

But we must be on our guard, and not allow the student of nature to impose upon us, to give us mere theories or hypotheses as facts. It is here that we are in great peril at the present time.

When astronomers discourse upon the size, distance, movement, of the bodies in our solar system—matters which to a certain extent come within their view—we may well give heed ; but if we are told that the sun is a world in the vigour of youth, and the moon a world in old age, however much appearances may give colour to such statements, it must at once be seen that this is merely opinion, which may interest, but which gives no Heaven-born light for our instruction.

Again, when teachers of natural science tell you that a man, with all his wonderful attributes of

imagination, moral consciousness, reason, speech, is the outcome of the lower orders of creation, and that simply because there is a certain resemblance in the structure of his body; that man's parentage is from an ape, because the ape, like man, has a backbone, and teeth somewhat similar;—when, upon such evidence as this, the doctrine of evolution, as it is called, is put forward as the great discovery of the age, and is really becoming as the image which King Nebuchadnezzar set up, which all peoples and nations and languages are called upon to bow themselves down before, and to worship—which doctrine is the tap-root of the infidelity spreading throughout the educated world at the present day—it is time for us to be upon our guard, and *not* to accept as truths the mere speculations of men. On a subject such as this the Christian should say to himself, “Do I not see miracles of God's creative power in the present day? Do I not see men born again of the Spirit, having a new heart given to them? and is not this the effect wrought by the God of power and of love, in whom we live and have our being, who is everywhere present, creating and sustaining? And can I refuse to believe that there is anything which has come into existence irrespective of this His

creative will, and survives otherwise than by His omnipresent and sustaining power?" Let all such senseless hypotheses and theories, mere conceits of the unsanctified intellect, be cast to the moles and to the bats, and let them not be accepted as facts of true science, which are as revelations from God.

While, then, we would refuse to receive as facts the mere speculations of clever men, we must not refuse to believe in demonstrated truths, such as the movement of the heavenly bodies, and the great antiquity of our globe. Should the Scripture appear to teach that the sun rises and sets, when we know that this is not scientifically true; and that the earth came into existence but six thousand years ago, and was the product of six days of twenty-four hours, when we have such striking evidence that the creation of the earth has been in the distant past, so distant as to be beyond the calculations even of imagination;—we must then consider to see if there be a reason why the Scripture so speaks; and, moreover, we must strive to see whether there be not a *depth* of meaning, especially in this record of the creation, which men generally have not hitherto perceived.

Now, we must bear in mind that the Bible is

God's Book, intended for the education of the human race ; and that men in some regions of the world are ever in a state of infancy, so far as knowledge is concerned. The Israelites under Moses were, in regard to the knowledge of God and of the laws which govern the universe, in a state of infancy, and it was needful to speak to them as children in knowledge ; it was needful to speak to them the language of appearances, when speaking of the rising and setting of the sun. Had Moses or any of the writers of Holy Scripture spoken otherwise, and talked of the day being the result of the earth moving on its own axis, who would or could have understood them ? Are we not compelled, although we know the astronomical, scientific truth, to speak to our children, and to all the uneducated, in this same language of appearances, and say that the sun rose this morning and will set this evening ? To speak otherwise, even to those who know the scientific truth, would be considered an affectation.

Bearing, then, in mind the unprepared state of the human understanding to comprehend statements of scientific truth ; bearing in mind that God's Word is not to reveal the secrets of the material world, but to inform us that He is the God of the

Universe—the Creator and Sustainer of all things, “in whom we live and move and have our being ;” bearing these truths in mind, I think we shall see how sublime is this record of creation, and how adapted to the need of men.

In reviewing it intelligently, we must remove some stumbling-blocks which the teachers of the Bible have put in our way. And the first is in regard to the time at which the creation of the world took place. In many of the Bibles which have marginal notes it will be seen that the date is given of four thousand and four years before Christ was born.

Now, how is this date arrived at? Why, by putting together the ages of the patriarchs, which are given. But up to what point does this four thousand and four years conduct? Why, it is to the time when Adam was taken into covenant with the Lord God. Prior to this there are the unfoldings of creation from the time that the earth was without form and void, until the period when this globe was made a fit habitation for man. And the time required for this development the Scripture permits the imagination of man to supply ; and in this way it does not, in this particular, come into conflict with philosophic speculation.

Again, in regard to this outstretching in these incalculable ages of the past, when this process of the earth's preparation was being carried on and the varied orders of animated existence were brought into being, six days of creation are spoken of. But surely we have here the language of symbol, used simply to instruct us in the fact that there was an *order* in creation ; that the earth has passed through its embryonic state—its state of infancy and youth, ere being prepared as a fitting stage for the presence and work of man.

And what are these days spoken of in the Book of Genesis ? Are they days of twelve hours—the idea which has fastened upon men's minds—thus creating a stumbling-block ? Nothing of the kind. It is simply said that " God divided the light from the darkness, that He "called the light day, and the darkness night : and the evening and the morning were the first day."

We may see the propriety as well as need of regarding these days thus spoken of as symbolic periods of time, seeing that the day is thus used by Christ and His apostles to signify, not a period of twelve hours, but that period during which the light of God's truth is shining on a man—the period of his existence upon earth. Christ says, " Work

while it is called to-day ; for the night cometh, when no man can work." And St. Paul takes a wider sweep when making use of the same symbolic expression ; for he speaks of the day as symbolizing the whole period of this age of Christ's dispensation of grace. In writing to the Corinthians (2 Epist. vi. 2) he says, "Now is the accepted time ; behold, now is *the day* of salvation."

Again, there is another point to be noticed, which is a misunderstanding of the Scripture, and that in regard to the sun, moon, and stars being created as on the fourth day. To suppose this to be the scriptural statement is at once to create astonishment and incite to unbelief.

And in regard to this point, only reflect for one moment what the record does state, and what it does state emphatically ; and is it not this, that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" ? Yes ; at the spoken Word of Him, by whom all things were made, this universe of stars, of sun and moon and planets, as well as our earth, came forth into existence. "He spake, and they were made: He commanded, and they stood forth." Yes ; "by the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth"—by His Spirit. And if God, then, said,

"Let there be light: and there was light," surely the sun must have *then* been in the heavens to disperse the darkness. And this manifestation of the light, be it observed, took place during the first symbolic day; so that to suppose that the sun, moon, and stars were not created until they are spoken of on the fourth day, is a misapprehension on our part, causing a needless stumbling-block to hostile sceptical minds.

If we thus correct our own notions, and do not place interpretations on Scripture which that Scripture does not sustain, and regard this Bible record of creation as a vehicle for impressing upon all men's minds, in whatsoever stage of intellectual progress they may be, the sublime truth that God is the creator and Sustainer of the universe, and that He impresses this belief upon men when about to enter into covenant relation with Himself, —we must see how suitable a record it is, and, by the light of scientific research, we may see how true it is so far as it discloses to us the secrets of the past. For no scientific mind would be indisposed to the belief that, in the earliest condition, this planet earth was a globe covered with water, and that the dense darkness of surrounding vapour encircled it. Most of the rocks of which the earth

is built are sedimentary, such as have been formed by the depositing of matter in water. When the waters are divided from the waters, we can understand how that encircling mists of vapour girdling the earth are lifted aloft into the stratification of clouds; and when the waters are gathered together into one place, and the dry land made to appear, this is a process of which we have specimens on a comparatively small scale, even in our own time, when mountains are lifted up above the level of the sea and islands are known to disappear.

But when the earth has her bosom laid bare, when she is to become as a *fruitful field*, then it is needful that the dark covering of clouds should open, that the sun, moon, and stars might appear. The sun was to give light upon the earth that the vegetation of the earth might thrive, that the fruits of the earth might come to maturity. And so now, in the order of this unfolding, as seen from man's standpoint on earth, the clouds open and the sun is seen to shine.

And then it is that the *waters* are said to bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that hath life. Subsequent to this is the recorded work of the sixth day, when the earth brings forth its living creatures, the varied orders of beasts of the

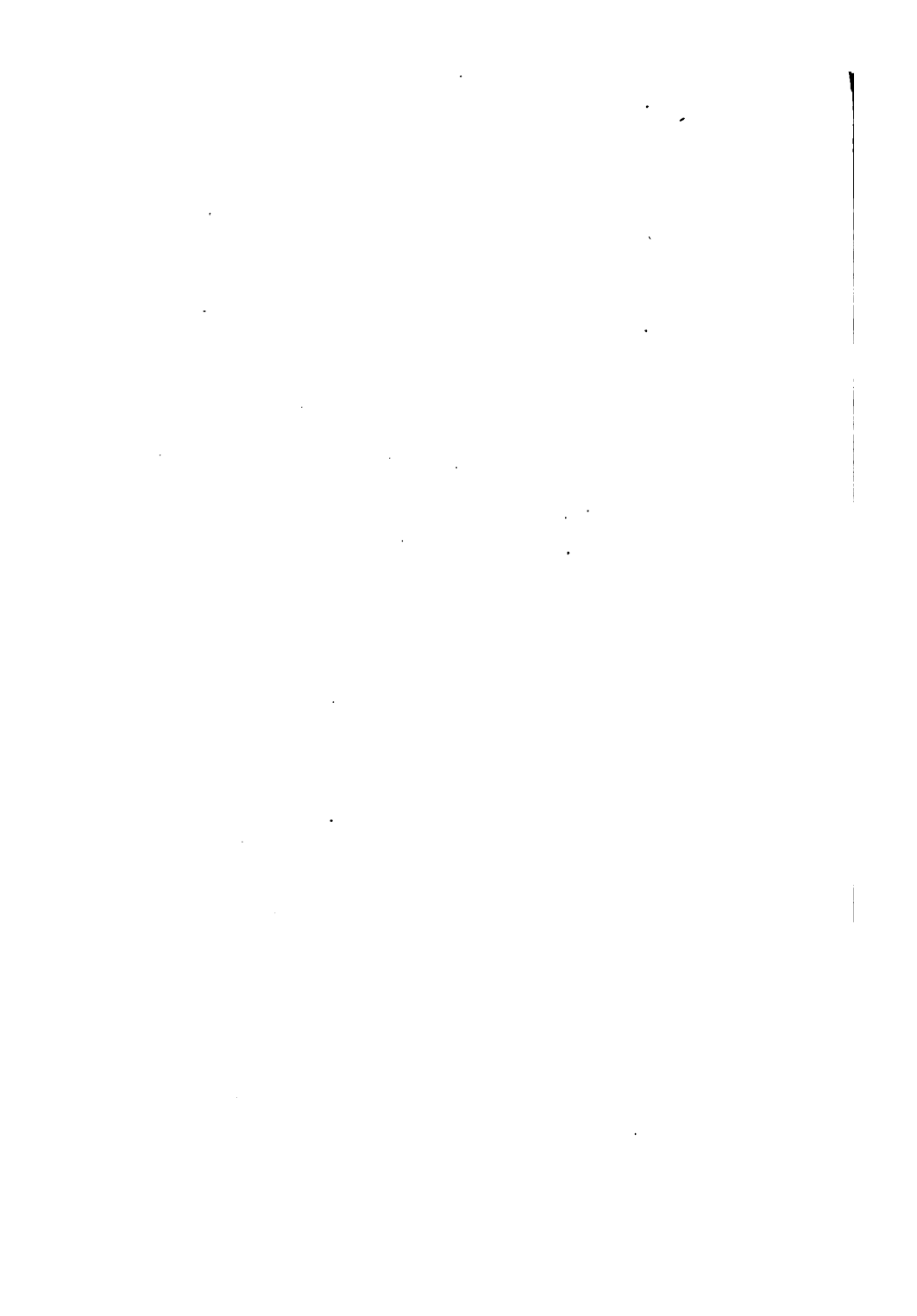
earth after their kind, when man is made the last and crowning work in the creation of God.

And what we have to note here is the *sequence* of the creation of living creatures. So far as man has been able to test this matter by observation of fossil remains in the earth, this sequence in the order of creation is that which for the most part appears to have been.

Now, all that we as believers desire or expect to see in such a record as this is that it does not conflict with such facts of science as God has permitted men, by the use of sanctified reason, to discover. We must be quite content to regard it as the *shadow* of a mighty process wrought out by God. This is all we can reasonably expect. The Bible is not to teach us natural science, but to impress our minds with the truth so essential for us to know—that God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. And to this end how effectual has this record been in the past! and how effectual may it still continue to be, if we only read and interpret it aright, setting aside some preconceived notions which, as we have seen, are really at variance with the written record! Herein are no absurdities such as appear in the cosmogonies of the ancients, but all is simple, natural, and majestic in statement,

exciting in the mind of the faithful astonishment and reverence. And if our hearts are disposed to faith and not to cavil ; if we are content to believe that it is a statement which symbolizes or reflects in shadow scientific truths in due time to be revealed, if we regard it as a statement level to the capacity of man's understanding in all periods of the world ;—then, indeed, we shall be persuaded of the truth that it is no utterance of ill-informed man, but the revelation of Almighty God, to be received in childlike faith and gratitude. And then peradventure to the mind thus faithful there will open out a deep spiritual significance in all which is here recorded, which will impress us with the fact that this record not only reveals God's power as the Creator of the universe, but shadows forth in emblem the order of his spiritual dealings with the souls of men whom He has created and whom He has redeemed. So that, while the man of science in these later days is permitted to discern in this record of creation a shadowing forth of many scientific truths revealed to him ; the divine likewise is permitted to see in this record a deep significance of spiritual truth, which fills us with adoring wonder at the wisdom and knowledge with which this portion of the Word of God is pregnant.

Stand fast, therefore, against all presumptuous, adverse criticism of men, so many of whom are content to reject the whole revelation of God. Give no heed to the conceits of unbelievers. Mind not what their credit may be with the unthinking multitude; only remember that their capacity for judging the deep things of God is very limited. No one with a six-foot rule can touch the bottom of the Atlantic. And this is the vain attempt of those who reject revelation and are wise in their own eyes, seeking to understand all mystery. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" (Job xi. 7, 8.)



SERMON II.

“And God said, Let there be light : and there was light.”
—GENESIS i. 3.

IN a previous discourse we endeavoured to show that there is nothing in the Bible record of creation which is at variance with the truths of natural science ; that that record appears to be, as it were, the shadow cast forward from the mighty operations wherewith God has created and fashioned the material universe. In that record, therefore, we do not expect to find the teachings of scientific truth. But we do expect to find that there shall be no contradiction between the word written in the Bible, and that which may be read upon the rocks.

We then said that by the student of the Bible there may be discovered in this record a spiritual depth of meaning which fills us with adoring

wonder at the wisdom and knowledge with which this portion of God's Word is pregnant.

It is to this spiritual teaching to which we now invite attention.

As a preliminary remark, we must observe that almost everything prominent to notice in the creation of the material world is used in Holy Scripture to illustrate or enforce the truths of the spiritual.

And the symbols especially to be noticed here are those of the earth and seas. The earth, which is fruit-bearing, is the emblem of the region on which dwell the peoples in covenant with "the Lord of the earth" (Rev. xi. 4). The seas are the emblem of the unfruitful nations—those who in *this age* of the world are not brought into covenant relation. The radical difference between the nations of the East and those of the West illustrates this. In the latter the gospel takes root; but in the former, although the gospel be preached as a witness, yet it has hardly any appreciable result. In this respect these nations are but as a wide waste of waters. But in *the age to come* the "Mighty Angel" (Christ), who has in His hand the little book *open*, shall set His "right foot upon the sea" and will declare that

there shall be "no more delay." And the command then given to His servant is this: "Thou must prophesy *again* before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (Rev. x. 1, 2, 6, 11).

In opening the Bible with the desire to discern the spiritual truths contained therein, let us ask the question, "What is the key-note of the Book?" The answer which shines forth upon us is this: "Let there be light"—the light of God's presence shining upon the hearts and consciences of men for their instruction and guidance. "In the beginning . . . the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light: and there was light."

Let us, then, fix our minds upon the deep, and let us regard it as an emblem, which, so far as this planet is concerned, was at the creation of man as the all-containing reservoir of "living souls" (Rev. xvi. 3).

Upon this abyss darkness rested, and God said, "Let there be light"—knowledge of Himself. "And God divided the light from the darkness," and thus established the two states of which moral

experience is capable. "And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night."

The moral states of good and evil in the world were thus established, and a reward of a heaven for the righteous then set forth. "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven."

We regard the waters above the firmament as the emblem of the redeemed in glory. St. John heard a voice from heaven "as the voice of many waters" (Rev. xiv. 2). These are divided from the waters on earth by the firmament, the *stereoma*, or fixed abode, from which the righteous shall shine forth as the stars (Dan. xii. 3). For these waters above the firmament there is calm and "rest;" but the waters of the earth beneath the firmament are "unstable" (Gen. xlix. 4). "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." And of the good in this world their portion is likewise that of tribulation—such are tempest-tossed.

The moral conditions of good and evil, of light and darkness, being thus established, and a heaven for the righteous prepared, the fruit-bearing ground on which man is to exercise his spiritual husbandry now appears. "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of water called He seas."

And it is this earth which is to bring forth grass and herb yielding seed, and fruit tree yielding fruit.

The earth now becomes the region of covenant-man's probation. Of the unfaithful it is said, "Every tree which bringeth not forth fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." And of the suffering faithful it is said, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps. cxxvi. 6).

But there can be no spiritual growth without spiritual light. To this end "God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night." What are these but His dispensations of grace? The greater light is the Day-Star, which rises with healing on His

wings. Christ says, "I am the Light of the world." The lesser light is the Jewish dispensation, which shone with reflected glory, before the Day-Star arose. "He made the stars also"—all who have been permitted, like Enoch and Noah, to make known his covenant. And of these lights it is especially said that they are "to give light upon the earth" (Gen. i. 15).

The waters are now to be filled with living creatures. The primary meaning that fish and fowl are created is on the surface of this record; but the deep spiritual meaning is essential to be supplied in order to give the full value to the terms used. "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life;" or, as the Septuagint Version has it, "walking things of living souls (*ἐρπετὰ ψυχῶν ζωσῶν*), and fowl that may fly toward (*ἐπὶ*) the earth."

This uncovenant region of the waters or seas thus have in them fish—emblems of human beings with "living souls" (Rev. xvi. 3); and the significance of the waters bringing forth fowl likewise may have this meaning, that the fish—the living souls in the sea, when they are to receive the gospel and so come into covenant relation with the "Lord of the earth"—in the symbolic language of the

Scriptures, become as fowl that they may fly toward the earth.

In the Book of the Apocalypse, when at the end of this age these uncovenanted nations are summoned to take part in its final struggle, they are described as fowls: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the mid-heaven, Come and gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God" (Rev. xix. 17).

As in regard to the waters, so in regard to the earth, which in the primary meaning of what is said is to bring forth animal life, there is need to discern the deep spiritual meaning. "And God said, Let the earth lead out the living soul after its kind, quadrupeds both slow-moving [such as graze] and wild beasts of the earth, after their kind" (*καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεός ἔξαγαγέτω ἡ γῆ ψυχὴν ζῶσαν καὶ γένος, τετράποδα καὶ ἑρπετὰ καὶ θηρία τῆς γῆς κατὰ γένος*).

These thus created have living souls, an expression only consistent with the secondary meaning, that the cattle and wild beasts are typical of human nature in its unrenewed state.

When St. Peter had the vision of the sheet knit at the four corners, and let down from heaven, in which were all manner of four-footed beasts of the

earth and wild beasts and fowls of the air ; and when he was bidden to rise, to kill, and to eat, it was taught him that the symbols in the vision represented the Gentiles, who were no longer to be outcasts from Israel, but were to be received into covenant relation with the Lord (Acts x. 9-15).

But the work of the sixth day is not yet completed. "And God said, Let us make man (τὸν ἄνθρωπον) in our image, after our likeness : and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him ; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it."

"And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the order [or, 'equipment'] of them (καὶ πᾶς ὁ κόσμος αὐτῶν)."

Thus far God (ὁ Θεός) hath revealed Himself as the Maker of all things.

But now, in this second chapter, God reveals Himself as the Lord God (Κύριος ὁ Θεός) in covenant relation with man.

Hitherto human nature has appeared as a living soul, typified by the fish in the sea and by creatures moving on the land, and that same human nature has likewise appeared in its highest development as man created in God's image (Gen. i. 27); but now, in this second record of creation, this creation of man in God's image is especially set forth, together with the duty which his covenant relationship with the Lord God puts upon him.

At the fourth verse of the second chapter a new order of ideas is set before us. It shows us what the Lord God does in distinction to what God did. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v. 17). This new record thus opens: "This is the book of the origin of the heaven and the earth when they were created, in the day the Lord God made the earth and the heaven, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground."

In this second record of the beginning of the heaven and the earth, the trial-scene and home of

redeemed man, there is no mention of darkness or of the deep ; and when the earth is spoken of it is no longer as without form and void ; but it is as a fruitful field, which has within its bosom seeds capable of growth, needing the rain from heaven—the grace of God—and the tillage of man.

The earth having been prepared for spiritual husbandry, the man is now equipped for this duty, and is placed by the Lord God in the vineyard, to work for Him, and thus enters upon covenant relation with his Maker. The Adam is now created after God's own image, with the capability of rendering a spiritual service. Hitherto man was "of the earth, earthy." By a general law which God had established he had come into being ; God had hitherto said, "Let the earth bring forth [or, 'lead out'] the living soul : " but the work of raising human nature to its true manhood is the direct operation of the Spirit of God, and is a special act of grace.

And this work of God thus raising human nature to its true manhood appears clearly in the Septuagint Version of the Scriptures, wherein it is said, "And God fashioned the man (hitherto) dust from the earth, and breathed on to his countenance the breath of life, and man became a

living soul;" that is, a living soul in the higher sense of the word, as living no longer unto himself, but unto God. This fashioning of the Adam is the equivalent to the new creation in Christ Jesus. Christ breathed on to His disciples, in the same way that He as the Lord God breathed on to the countenance of the Adam, and all such, being born of the Spirit from above, become new creatures. Such are no longer carnally minded, in a state of death, but spiritually minded, which is *life* and peace.

Thus far we have treated of the creation, and seen man raised to his true dignity, made in God's image, his human soul made alive with the Spirit of God. And with this high privilege comes his duty; and in what that duty consists is now revealed. At the eighteenth verse in the Septuagint we read, "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever it was Adam called it a living soul—this was the name of it." This discernment of Adam that they had living souls reveals to us his sense of responsi-

bility. Such, he saw, were to become the objects of his care, and were to exercise his faithfulness in having regard to their well-being. Without their presence there would not have been that which could call forth all the high faculties of his illumined soul. In this regard we see how it was not good for man "to live alone," and how such become as it were "a help meet for him."

With these fundamental ideas, we come to see the significance of the garden planted eastward in Eden, in which the Lord God placed the Adam to "dress it, and to keep it." And is not "the vineyard of the Lord" the emblem used throughout the Scriptures to show man what is his duty as a husbandman, who is to work for God?

It should here be noted that, ere this garden of Eden is planted with every plant of the field and every herb of the field which were destined to grow (grow in grace), the earth which was untilled (for there was not a man to till the ground) had hitherto received no rain from heaven, no outpouring from above of the Spirit of God; but "there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." And what is this but an indication that, before the Lord God brought the Adam into covenant relation with

Himself, and imposed upon him the duty of spiritual husbandry, human nature had nothing for its guidance but the natural conscience. Such was as the mist which went up out of the ground. But now the rain descends and the Spirit is breathed on to man's countenance; and we find the Lord God conversing with man—opening out to Adam his responsibility when He brings the living creatures to Adam to name them; and when, in the cool of the day, in the evening of calm reflection, the Lord God is heard talking with him, bringing his disobedience to remembrance.

But let us ask more particularly what may be understood by this land of Eden; what by the garden of Paradise planted in it; what by the river, which comes forth from Eden, which runs through the garden, and then issues from it into the wide world, being parted into four heads or branches (Gen. ii. 10).

And does not God's own revelation shed light upon the dark mysterious pages of His Word? And have we not at the end of the Bible, in that wonderful Book of the Apocalypse, a key wherewith to open the mystery at the beginning; for therein we have the Paradise of God spoken of,

in which is the tree of life: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Rev. ii. 7)? And that tree of life is the symbol of Christ's presence, on which the soul of the faithful feeds.

Christ, then, is the Tree planted in Paradise, and it is to Paradise that the chosen and the redeemed are taken. To the penitent thief the promise was given, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Of these it is said, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. vii. 16, 17).

The enclosure of Paradise in which is the Tree of life is that favoured spot in which Christ dwells with His redeemed people. At the close of the Book of the Revelation, when all probation of men is over, and when all the redeemed of the Lord are then gathered together, they are spoken of under the symbol of the New Jerusalem. And this city has been built up in Paradise, because

Christ, the Tree of life, is growing in the midst of it. In describing this city St. John says, "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life." Here, likewise, is the river which was to water the garden, running through this city. And it is by tracing this river to its source that we come to understand what is meant by Eden, the land in which the river rises, flowing through Paradise the enclosed portion of it, and thence parting into four heads penetrating into the wide world.

Where, then, does this river take its rise? St. John says, "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb." This is the river which is flowing through the street of the New Jerusalem, built up in Paradise, in which grows the "Tree of life." And this is the river which is spoken of in Genesis, as the river which went out of Eden to water the garden.

Eden thus appears to reveal the locality in which the Lord God manifests His presence and favour. It is the spiritual region on which the Sun of glory shines; for this surely is the significance of the garden being planted *eastward* in Eden, revealing that portion of it which is first reached

by the rays of the glory, wherein now dwell those who are as firstfruits unto God.

Out of Eden, from the throne of God and of the Lamb, comes flowing through the garden of Paradise the pure river which is the emblem of the Spirit of God ; and when the river issued from the garden, it was parted and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison, the second Gihon, the third Hiddekel, and the fourth river is Euphrates.

What is the general idea here given but this, that the streams here noted as branching off signify the direction which the grace of God has taken in the world ? They would seem to mark the boundaries within which the grace of God in *this age* of the world is to disclose its fruitfulness.

And we need not too curiously strive to know what is the significance of the first three rivers named ; but we may remark upon the prominent manner in which Euphrates is mentioned : "The fourth river is Euphrates."

And it is here again that the Apocalypse comes to our aid. It was on this river that Babylon was built. And it is from this city and this river that the emblems in the Apocalypse are taken, and are in that book used as symbols, seeing they have

attached to them the differential epithet "great," being called "the great city" and "the great river."

And in the unfoldings of the Apocalypse it is this river, the symbolic great Euphrates, which is used to mark the boundary line, at the end of this age, dividing the symbolic great Babylon, and all the forces of evil, from Jerusalem and all the redeemed of the Lord. This river is, then, to be dried up (Rev. xvi. 12), that the enemies of the Lord may pass over, and then the last great world-struggle of *this age* will take place. All the nations east of the Euphrates in the symbolic imagery of the Apocalypse are as the unfruitful seas, as distinguished from those west of it, which are as the fruit-bearing earth. But when the *age to come* has arrived that the mighty Angel shall set His right foot upon the sea, and His left upon the earth (Rev. x. 2), and declare that there shall be no more delay in bringing the power of His gospel home to the hearts of these nations, which shall then be brought into covenant with Him, then the river of God shall flow with full volume into the sea, bringing life. The Prophet Ezekiel has a vision vouchsafed to him in his forty-seventh chapter, of the waters which issued from under the threshold of the house of God *eastward*, deepening into a river. "Then said he unto me,

These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea ; which being brought forth into the sea, the waters (thereof) shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live : and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither : for they shall be healed ; and everything shall live whither the river cometh."

This shows us the abounding grace of God, how that in due time all shall feel the breathings of His Spirit upon them. Man in his unregenerate state "is like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest." And on this deep of existence it is that the primal darkness rested ere God said "Let there be light." But in the future, when the mystery of God shall be finished, when the conditions of God's moral government have been fulfilled, and the mediatorial work of Christ has been perfected ; when all enemies have been overcome, and the last enemy, Death, abolished ; when all things shall have been "made new,"—then darkness upon the face of the deep shall be no longer, but all the waters of existence shall be penetrated with light and life. And this we deem to be the significance of that sea of glass like unto

crystal, which is seen in the *anticipative* vision of the Apocalypse outstretched before the throne of God. The fire of God's judgments have been seen mingling with the sea (Rev. xv. 2), but now the Holy Spirit of God has completed the remedial work, and has withdrawn from His purifying contact, and the light of His love is that which alone rests upon it. And in describing his vision of the throne of God, St. John says, "And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God, and before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal" (Rev. iv. 5, 6).

Here, then, in the sea of glass we have the emblem of the "great multitude" before the throne, crying, with loud voice, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. vii. 10); and their voice is "as the voice of many waters" (Rev. xiv. 2).

The thought which now possesses the mind is the wonderful depth of meaning in God's Word. It is a mine of wealth which we cannot exhaust. That portion of it which at first sight may appear to be but as food for babes, on patient research into it is found to be pregnant with strong meat for men.

And how does this testify to the truth, to the

excellency and beauty of His Word, so full, so rich, so enlightening! And how will it teach us to come to the study of it in a spirit of thankful humility, holding fast to it as an anchor of the soul which can alone enable us to hold on against the storms of evil which are beating overhead, and to resist the under-currents of infidelity which are streaming all around!

